

William Anthony

Art Cologne

April 2015

Stalke Galleri in Collaboration with Rehbein Galerie

Art Cologne 2015 William Anthony – Solo Show

Thomas Rehbein Galerie and Stalke Galleri (Denmark) presented a retrospective insight into the work of William Anthony, including his drawings and paintings.

William Anthony, born in 1934 in Fort Monmouth, New Jersey, studied briefly European Art History at Yale University in New Haven with Josef Albers, among others.

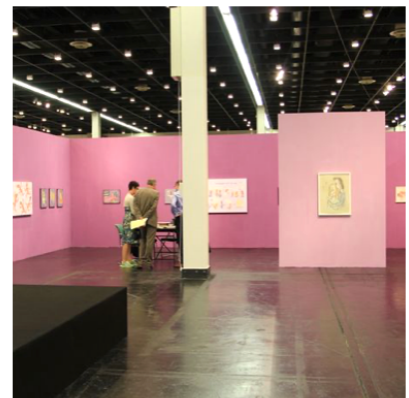
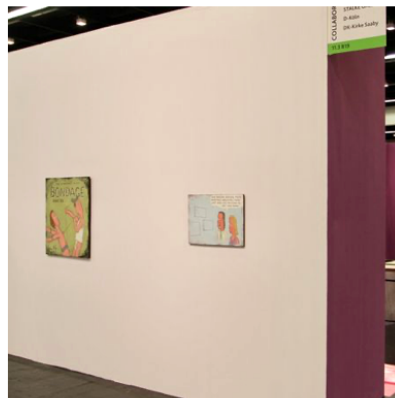
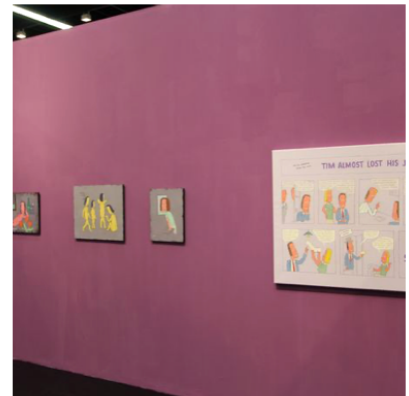
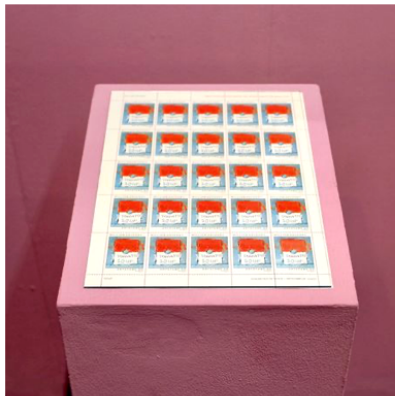
Anthony's drawings and paintings were critical commentaries on contemporary culture and subtle reflections on the concept of art in the form of skewed satire. Combined with naughty and downright perverse fantasies, they depicted contemporary historical events, illustrations of the Bible, mythological anecdotes, parodies of World War II, covers of gay magazines, and appropriations of works by classic and modern masters, all rendered in a witty and pointed comic-like language.

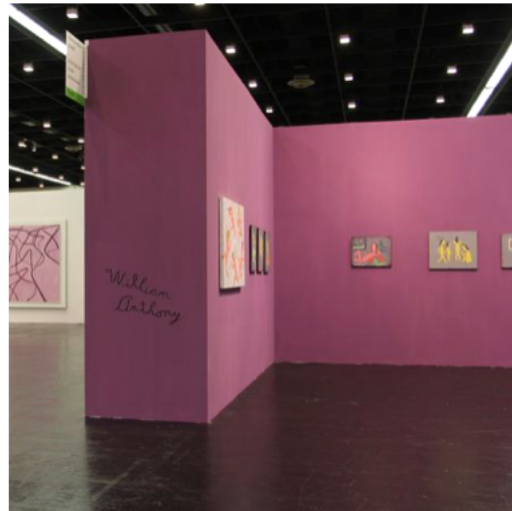
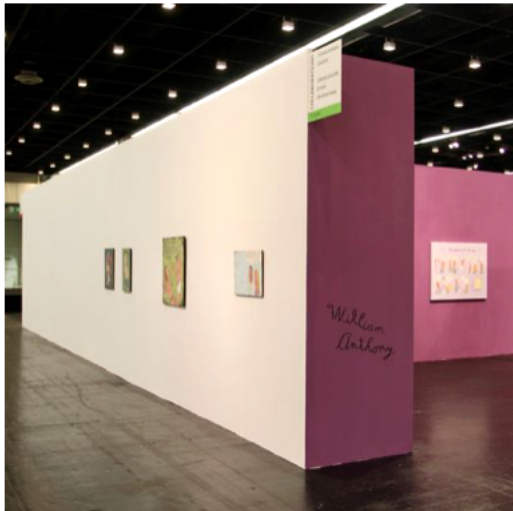
Anthony's style at first resembled the simplicity of children's drawings, but on closer consideration revealed itself to be calculated and profound. His idiosyncratic style incorporated deliberate mistakes: flat faces without chins and foreheads, stubby fingers and toes. Especially these mistakes and imperfections liberated Anthony from the restrictions of classical drawing and painting techniques and allowed him to embrace a distinct personal style. The pseudo-dilettantism of his grotesque, vulgar, and surreal subjects served as a vehicle for his satirical views on society and its banalities. By mocking the methods of classical figure drawing, Anthony's ironic works not only provoked a smile; the viewer was likely to laugh out loud more than a few times.

William Anthony was a strong example of an artist's artist. His oeuvre of more than 50 years had, over time, drawn the attention of fellow artists and friends. Roy Lichtenstein, Jasper Johns, and Andy Warhol collected his works. (Warhol's commentary on Anthony's Bible drawings stated: "I can't wait for the New Testament. This is the first Bible I could understand.") Art critics including Ken Johnson, Robert Rosenblum, Roberta Smith, and Leo Steinberg championed his work. As early as the 1990s, galleries such as Leo Castelli and Pat Hearn in New York exhibited his work. Later, his works were shown at Dorfman Projects, New York; Matthew Marks Gallery, New York; Paula Cooper Gallery, New York; and Robert and Tilton Gallery, Los Angeles.

William Anthony's work was held in collections including the Art Institute of Chicago; the Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, New York; the Museum Ludwig, Cologne; the Museum of Modern Art, New York; and the Whitney Museum of American Art, New York.

Sam Jedig and Thomas Rehbein





William Anthony, Stalke Galleri & Rehbein Galerie, Art Cologne, 2015.



From the opening